

## Contents

[Dear Permission to be Powerful Reader, The more I understand people, the...](#)



Dear *Permission to be Powerful Reader*,

**The more I understand people, the more stunned I am.**

We like to think we know how human beings work.

We assume people are logical, that they operate on some shared foundation of truth and reason.

## **But what if we were wrong?**

What if our machinery operated differently from the way we think?

## **That brings me to gaslighting.**

One of the most insidious human inventions.

### **Gaslighters don't live in the real world.**

They distort truth, bend reality, and rewrite history in real-time.

They manipulate, omit, and twist details to fit their own version of events. And the worst part?

### **They don't respect your truth.**

Your version of reality deserves respect.

That's the short answer to dealing with a gaslighter: do not engage.

Now, let's go deeper.

### **Not everyone lives in a world where facts are irrefutable.**

Some people live in stories—stories they invent, reinforce, and force onto others.

They curate narratives, omitting inconvenient details, spinning reality until it suits their agenda.

## **I despise this topic.**

### **It makes my brain feel like Swiss cheese.**

**Too many years of being gaslit left me questioning myself at every turn.**

She was unbeatable.

She fooled trained professionals. A judge. Family. Strangers.

There's a reason I avoid talking about this. I don't want my credibility called into question. I don't want to be seen as the villain.

## **I am entitled to my truth.**

### **Especially after having it erased for so long.**

I hold onto it fiercely.

That's why I gave up lying altogether. When your reality is constantly being distorted by someone else, brutal honesty becomes your only lifeline.

Because if I let go of the truth, even for a second, I'd drown in the gaslighting.

## **She was unbeatable.**

Even with a professional at my side, she demolished me.

My only option was to walk away. You cannot reason with someone who refuses to engage in good faith.

She never listened.

She was always sure she was right.

## **And she believed her own bullshit.**

Her mother was the same way—constantly feeding her untreated anxiety with wild, unverified stories.

One time, we were thinking about visiting a small island just off the coast.

You would need a little boat.

Just a little bit too far off the beaten path for my mother in law.

She discouraged us from going...

## **Because rastas with machine guns were there.**

Only in retrospect did I piece together what was happening.

## **People always tell you who they are.**

Even when they're hiding it.

If you listen closely, they'll let it slip.

I remember one day, clear as crystal.

She looked me in the eye and said:

**"No matter what, I never back down. It doesn't matter what they say. Always double down."**

I sat there, stunned.

That level of deliberate deception—that sheer refusal to ever admit fault—was something I couldn't even begin to process.

Most people are just kids in adult bodies.

You think you're dealing with a rational, reasonable, sane person.

You're wrong.

**Some people stopped maturing at age two.**

## **The Opposite of Truth**

Some people don't care about truth.

**They care about winning.**

They care about control—who gets to tell the story, who gets to be believed.

They don't just twist reality.

**Sometimes, they'll tell the exact opposite of the truth.**

**That's what makes gaslighting so effective.**

**It's disorienting.**

**It scrambles your brain.**

**It short-circuits your ability to defend yourself.**

When someone tells you something so blatantly false—so backwards—your mind struggles to process it.

**It's called a double bind.**

Your brain can't think in two opposing directions at once.

It makes you feel crazy.

It makes you question yourself.

**And that's exactly what they want.**

▫ Maybe it was your fault.

▫▫ Maybe you do have it all wrong.

▫▫▫ Maybe YOU'RE the asshole.

That's how they sink their hooks into you.

That's how they keep you trapped.

**But here's what I've learned:**

# I don't allow gaslighters in my life.

I can't afford to.

- They're emotionally violent people.
- They don't just hurt you—they erode you.
- They make you doubt your own mind.

**That's the worst kind of abuse.**

## The Moment I Understood

One day, I realized something.

**A gaslighter doesn't just want to win the argument.**

**They want to win control over reality itself.**

**They want the power to tell you what happened—to dictate your thoughts, your memories, your emotions.**

You're not allowed to be a person.

No.

**You're their object.**

And they will tell you how things are.

It's dehumanizing.

It's psychological warfare.

And the only way to win is to walk away.

## **The Price of Waking Up**

Getting divorced gave me a clarity like nothing else.

**I'd been blind.**

**I missed 90% of what was going on in my own relationship.**

**I was married to a stranger.**

**Eight years, and I never really knew her.**

She kept her guard up the entire time.

She never let me in.

## **And I was too gaslit to see it.**

**Now, I look back, and I see it all so clearly.**

**People operate in layers.**

▫ The public persona.

▫ The friend persona.

☞ The work persona.

☞ The spouse persona.

**And then, buried underneath all of it—hidden from sight—lies the real person.**

**Most people will NEVER see that version.**

But if you're married to someone...

Shouldn't they?

Shouldn't there be trust?

That's what still blows my mind.

**If you don't trust your own spouse, why get married?**

It makes no sense.

**But gaslighting doesn't follow logic.**

**It follows POWER.**

**The Truth Is a Dealbreaker**

**I had been surviving on crumbs my whole life.**

**That's why I didn't see it.**

I took those same crumbs when my wife gave me them as usual. As love.  
As how things were supposed to be.

**It took me years to understand how deeply  
distorted her reality was.**

**And even longer to realize how  
much that distortion had infected  
my own mind.**

**But here's what I know now:**

- ☞ I am the exact opposite of a gaslighter.
- ☞ I don't manipulate.
- ☞ I don't distort.
- ☞ I don't rewrite history.
- ☞ I tell the truth.

**Even when it's inconvenient.**

**Even when it makes me look bad.**

**Even when I don't want to.**

Because the moment you start lying—to yourself, to others—you lose your grip on reality.

And I will never go through that again.

My aunt pointed it out once.

## **"You're a straight shooter. That's rare."**

**I hadn't even thought about it that way.**

But she's right.

Telling the truth isn't just my policy—it's my armor.

Because once you know someone is lying to you... once you see the game for what it is...

You're free.

And that's a dealbreaker for me now.

**If I can't get the truth from you, I'm not interested.**

If I know I'm being lied to, I'm out.

No Room for Gaslighters

## **Gaslighting is a serious offense.**

You tolerate gaslighting, you enable someone who doesn't mind fighting dirty. Someone who doesn't mind hurting you if it means they can stay in control.

## **I'm done tolerating it.**

- ☞ If you treat me like an opponent instead of a person, you're out.
- ☞ If you twist reality to fit your agenda, you're out.
- ☞ If I have to prove my version of events to you as if my lived experience isn't valid, you're out.

**The only way a person like that is getting into my life again is if they sue me, and I get subpoenaed.**

That's it.

Otherwise?

**They have NO place in my world.**

Divorce gave me clarity.

It wiped the fog away.

And in that new clarity, I've realized something even deeper:

**I have GOOD judgment.**

I always second-guessed myself too much.

I thought I needed validation from others to confirm what I felt.

But I don't.

My therapist thinks so.

I think so.

And that's all I need.

I don't need to convince anyone.

I don't need to argue my truth.

Because I deserve better than dishonest and malicious.

And I won't settle for anything less.

When I'm with someone. I'm with them.

And I expect them to be with me. Not against me.

I had the very sobering experience of having not one but two therapists listen to my story, and they both said the same thing:

## **“That’s not a relationship.”**

Even more vexing, neither of them elaborated.

Sometimes, therapists can be weirdly cryptic, and I never understand why.

**One of them said, “I was completely subjugated.”**

Well that sucks.

Gaslighting is about power and dominance.

I'm not into people who want dominance over me.

## **Not anymore.**

Until next time,



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anton Volney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Anton" on the left and "Volney" on the right. A horizontal line extends from the end of "Volney" to the right, and a diagonal line descends from the top of "Volney" towards the end of the horizontal line.

Dancer, Writer, Buddhist



Permission to be Powerful is a reader-supported publication. To receive new posts and support my work, [consider becoming a free or paid subscriber.](#)